Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.   (Original) A method of committing a transaction to a database, the method comprising:

initiating a database transaction;

creating an electronic record that includes transaction data from the database transaction;

executing a rule associated with the record to determine whether an electronic signature is required to connote review and/or approval of the electronic record, wherein if execution of the rule results in a determination that an electronic signature is required, requesting the electronic signature prior to committing the transaction to the database.

2.   (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the electronic record comprises data generated from multiple tables of the database.

3.   (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the electronic record is stored in a common repository of electronic records that provides an audit trail that cannot be altered or disabled by users of the database.

4.   (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the electronic record is stored as unstructured data in a character large object (CLOB) format.

5.   (Original) The method of claim 4 wherein the unstructured data comprises a well-formed XML document stored within a column of a database table.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5 wherein XML fields of the unstructured data are filled with the transaction data based on a predefined mapping of a data type definition to multiple data sources.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of, if execution of the rule results in a determination that an electronic signature is required, displaying at least some of the transaction data in the electronic record on a computer display and requesting the electronic signature.

8. (Currently amended) The method of claim 7 wherein the transaction data in the electronic record is displayed according to a predefined layout set forth in an XSL style sheet ~~and wherein the~~ associated with unstructured data ~~further comprises~~ comprising a copy of the electronic record as displayed, wherein the unstructured data is stored within [[in]] a ~~second~~ column of [[the]] a database table.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising obtaining and verifying the electronic signature, and thereafter, committing the database transaction to the database.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the rule requires a plurality of different electronic signatures and wherein, if execution of the rule results in a determination that a plurality of electronic signatures are required, requesting the plurality of electronic signatures prior to committing the data to the database.

11. (Original) The method of claim 9 wherein, if the electronic signature is rejected or otherwise cannot be obtained, the transaction is rolled-back and not committed to the database.

12. (Original) A computer system that manages electronic records stored in a database, the computer system comprising:

a processor;

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a database; and

a computer-readable memory coupled to the processor, the computer-readable memory configured to store a computer program;

wherein the processor is operative with the computer program to:

(i) initiate a database transaction;

(ii) create an electronic record that includes transaction data from the database transaction; and

execute a rule associated with the record to determine whether an electronic signature is required to connote review and/or approval of the electronic record, wherein if execution of the rule results in a determination that an electronic signature is required, requesting the electronic signature prior to committing the transaction to the database.

13.   (Original) The computer system of claim 12 wherein the electronic record comprises data generated from multiple tables of the database.

14.   (Original) The computer system of claim 12 wherein the electronic record is stored in a common repository of electronic records that provides an audit trail that cannot be altered or disabled by users of the system.

15.   (Original) The computer system of claim 12 wherein the electronic record comprises unstructured data in a character large object (CLOB) format.

16.   (Currently amended) The computer system of claim 15 wherein the unstructured data comprises a well-formed XML document stored within a column of a table stored in the database.

17.   (Original) The computer system of claim 16 wherein fields of the electronic record are filled with the transaction data based on a predefined mapping of a data type definition to multiple data sources.

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18. (Original) The computer system of claim 12 further comprising obtaining and verifying the electronic signature, and thereafter, committing the database transaction to the database.

19. (Currently amended) A computer program product ~~stored on~~ having a computer-readable storage medium storing instructions for a computer system having a processor operative with the instructions for managing electronic records stored in a database, the computer program product comprising:

 code for initiating a database transaction;

 code for creating an electronic record that includes transaction data from the database transaction; and

 code for executing a rule associated with the record to determine whether an electronic signature is required to connote review and/or approval of the electronic record, wherein if execution of the rule results in a determination that an electronic signature is required, requesting the electronic signature prior to committing the transaction to the database.

20. (Currently amended) The computer program product of claim 19 wherein the code for creating an electronic record ~~creates~~ further comprises code for creating electronic records in response to the occurrence of a predefined event.

21. (Currently amended) The computer program product of claim 19 wherein the electronic record is stored in a common repository of electronic records that provides an audit trail that cannot be altered or disabled by users of the system.

22. (Currently amended) The computer program product of claim 21 wherein the electronic record comprises unstructured data in a character large object (CLOB) format.

23. (Currently amended) The computer program product of claim 22 wherein the unstructured data comprises a well-formed XML document stored within a column of a table stored in the database.

24.   (Currently amended) The computer program product of claim 23 wherein fields of the electronic record are filled with the transaction data based on a predefined mapping of a DTD to multiple data sources.

25.   (Currently amended) The computer program product of claim 19 further comprising code for obtaining and verifying the electronic signature, and thereafter, for committing the electronic record to the database.

26.   (Currently amended) A computer-implemented method of committing a transaction to a database, the method comprising:

automatically creating an electronic record including transaction data associated with the transaction in response to the occurrence of a predetermined event, wherein the electronic record comprises the transaction data stored as a well-formed XML document in a character large-object (CLOB) format of a column of a database table;

storing the electronic record in a common repository of electronic records that provides an audit trail that cannot be altered or deleted by users of the system;

executing a rule associated with the electronic record to determine whether an electronic signature is required to connote review and/or approval of the electronic record; and

if execution of the rule results in a determination that an electronic signature is required, (i) displaying the transaction data in the electronic record according to a predefined layout set forth in an XSL style sheet associated with the electronic record and storing a copy of the transaction data as displayed in a character large-object (CLOB) format of a second column of the database table and (ii) requesting, obtaining and verifying the electronic signature prior to committing the transaction into a database.